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RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 1346

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2798

RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 3030

RHMFISS/USCENTCOM SPECIAL HANDLING MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIRUT 001269

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/FO, NEA/ELA

ALSO FOR IO ACTING A/S HOOK, PDAS WARLICK

USUN FOR KHALILZAD/WOLFF/SCHEDLBAUER

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DOD/OSD FOR A/S LONG

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [UNSC](#) [MARR](#) [IS](#) [LE](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: LEBANON: FM SALLOUKH RECEIVES AMBASSADOR'S CREDENTIALS; TELLS DAS HALE THAT PROSPECTS FOR PEACE DEPEND ON ISRAEL

REF: BEIRUT 1201

Classified By: Ambassador Michele J. Sison for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) On August 27, the Ambassador presented copies of her credentials to Minister of Foreign Affairs Fawzi Salloukh. In a subsequent meeting with the Ambassador and visiting NEA DAS David Hale, Salloukh asked the USG to place pressure on Israel to implement its share of UNSCR 1701. He emphasized that the Lebanese want peace, but added this cannot happen if Israeli violations continue and the Palestinian situation remains unresolved.

¶2. (C) Incredibly, Salloukh boasted that the Syrian-Lebanese border is now secure, thanks to cooperation between the two countries, and that no evidence of arms smuggling existed. He asked that the USG provide physical evidence for Hale's claims to the contrary. Salloukh also stressed the need for advanced equipment and training for the Lebanese Armed Forces to sustain internal stability. End Summary.

IMPLEMENTATION OF UNSCR 1701

¶3. (C) The Ambassador, accompanied by DAS Hale and ConOff, met with Foreign Minister Fawzi Salloukh on August 28 after her presentation of credentials, DAS Hale assured Salloukh that the USG remains focused and committed to Lebanon. Hale said that the USG continues to support Lebanon with numerous military, security, and economic assistance projects, and is dedicated to keeping the partnership between the two countries strong.

¶4. (C) Salloukh told the Ambassador and DAS Hale that while the GOL had fulfilled all of its obligations under UNSCR 1701, Israel had taken no steps to do the same. Salloukh stated that Israel consistently violated all agreements and had not been receptive to any proposals for peace, including the Arab Initiative, the Oslo Accords, and the Madrid Conference. He urged the USG to pressure Israel to progress towards a peaceful resolution with Lebanon by implementing UNSCR 1701. "We are working for peace, but one side is not enough," he said.

¶5. (C) Salloukh complained that, in addition to Israel's failure to provide strike data on the location of cluster bombs placed in Lebanon, it was rumored that there were no more UNMAS funds to demine the areas. "This needs to be financed," he said. DAS Hale assured Salloukh that the USG was looking into the matter. He said that the USG would remain engaged in the Middle East peace process and that the U.S. presidential election would have no impact on U.S. commitment to resolving this issue.

PROSPECTS FOR PEACE AND  
DISARMAMENT CONTINGENT ON ISRAEL

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¶6. (C) "We Lebanese are fed up with war," Salloukh remarked. He stated, however, that the Lebanese people will continue taking all measures necessary to protect themselves as long as Israel continues to reject prospects for peace. "When the lands occupied by Israel are liberated," he said, "no fear will exist, and there will be no reason for arms."

SALLOUKH: SYRIAN-LEBANESE BORDER FULLY SECURE

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¶7. (C) Salloukh boasted that with the help of advanced technology and training provided by Lebanon's European allies, the Syrian-Lebanese border was now "secure" and no evidence existed of arms smuggling between the two countries. Salloukh highlighted the joint statement issued following the August 14 meeting between President Sleiman and President Asad (reftel) reaffirming coordination and cooperation between the two countries to secure shared borders. He claimed that "even the Syrians" are searching for advanced

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technologies to fulfill this pledge. Salloukh also alleged that despite the USG's concerns, "no evidence" of Hezbollah rearmament exists, citing the latest UN Security Council report on UNSCR 1701 (sic).

¶8. (C) DAS Hale responded that the USG had information to the contrary and that U.S and Israeli concerns about weapons smuggling and rearmament were valid and serious, and could have destabilizing consequences for Lebanon. "If this is happening, we want proof," Salloukh responded, referring to satellite imagery taken by both the USG and Israel. Salloukh also mentioned that the GOL is carefully monitoring southern Lebanon, and that UNIFIL has not reported any recent fighting or tension in the area. Hale said the point wasn't whether there was fighting at present, but to take steps to prevent fighting in the future -- starting with action to stop the uninhibited flow of weapons to Hizballah.

THE PALESTINIAN CRISIS -  
THEIR PROBLEM IS OUR PROBLEM

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¶9. (C) The Palestinian crisis "is the root of all problems in the Middle East," Salloukh explained. He said that if it is not solved, "flames will increase," and predicted the outbreak of another war. Salloukh added he was doubtful that current negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians would be fruitful, fearing that any real progress would be postponed until after the American elections. "This presents only further problems for Lebanon," he said.

¶10. (C) Salloukh urged that efforts to rebuild the destroyed Nahr Al-Barid Palestinian camp should be intensified. He said there are currently 30,000 displaced Palestinians "with nothing to do," hinting that this could be problematic in the future.

OUT WITH THE OLD FOR THE LAF

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¶11. (C) Turning to support for the LAF, Salloukh said "we don't need second-hand weaponry," emphasizing the need for advanced equipment and training for the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). He stressed the importance of USG support in creating a strong army to maintain internal stability. Hale agreed on the importance of supporting Lebanon's state institutions,

including the LAF.

¶12. (C) DAS Hale has cleared this cable.

SISON